



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING




JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

September 25, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Adoption of Resolution on New Merit Award Program

At the agenda planning meeting held on September 21, 2006, a member of the Board requested that the Board consider adopting a resolution in support of the new Merit Award Program.

Department staff have drafted the attached resolution for the Board's consideration.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education adopt the resolution attached to the Superintendent's memorandum dated September 25, 2006, regarding the proposed Merit Award Program.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Resolution

Proposed Merit Award Program

WHEREAS, national and state statistics indicate that the jobs of today and tomorrow are demanding levels of skills beyond high school; and

WHEREAS, national and state statistics indicate continued education beyond high school – at the bachelor's or associate degree levels, as well as at the level of industry certification – is critical for success in today's economy; and

WHEREAS, Michigan ranks below many other states in the proportion of its citizens who possess postsecondary degrees or industry certification; and

WHEREAS, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has called for Michigan to double the number of citizens possessing such degrees or certification over the next decade; and

WHEREAS, it is a recommendation of the Lt. Governor's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth that a high school diploma should no longer be the minimum attainment goal for students, but that instead all high school graduates should enroll in some form of postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, in December 2005, the State Board of Education approved new high school graduation requirements, which were signed into law by the Governor April 2006; and

WHEREAS, about 41 percent of Michigan high school graduates go on to college after graduation, but barely one-half of them complete a bachelor's degree within six years; and

WHEREAS, the Governor has proposed a new Merit Award Program that reinforces a value that a student's formal education should at minimum extend two years after high school, and would award \$4,000 in federal and state funds to students who:

Earn an associate's degree, or

- Earn a 2-year certificate of completion in a vocational training program, or**
- Complete a comparable vocational education program approved by the Department of Treasury, or**

Complete 50% or more of the academic requirements for a bachelor's degree at an approved postsecondary educational institution within 4 years of the student's initial enrollment; and

Has a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5, or has successfully completed a vocational education program that does not record grade point averages.

Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Michigan State Board of Education support the proposed Merit Award Program as benefiting Michigan's students by rewarding them for completion of some degree of postsecondary education, and strengthening Michigan's economy by increasing the number of highly-skilled and educated citizens.